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There are two important periods in the development of the printed (book) language, of which one extends back to 1530. In the first the language had a local character, but approached gradually the "Common German." In the second the book language has the features of the "Common German," and only a few local differences remain; but upper and middle German differ in many points. Middle German exerts an influence upon upper German so that the latter assimilates the form of the former. In the 15th century a greater unity in the written language was attained by the printing-press. At first the printers followed the official language of the chancellor's office, but later became independent. They had their dialectal differences, but strove to make their books as accessible as possible to the general public; hence they used the most common German. Munich, Ingolstadt, and especially Augsburg, became the principal seats of the presses.

The dialects of Basel, Strasburg, Nuremberg, and other places, have retained many of their older peculiarities and some of these peculiarities have found a home in the present language. However, Luther's language as found in his writings, especially in his Bible, forms the basis of the Modern High German written language. Luther deserves the praise of having put the final stamp upon the written language then in the process of formation. In his translation of the Bible he strove to give the language as wide-spread a popularity as possible, hence his care in selecting the best and most widely understood language in all Germany. This inclined strongly to the Middle German. With Opitz there came a certain conclusion in the development of the language, as he broke entirely with the obsolete and dialectal forms and accepted Luther's language with certain modifications. The efforts of the grammarians of the 16th century contributed much to the unity of the written language, and the German dictionaries, already begun in the 15th century and in the first decades of the 16th, had a great influence upon the unification of the Modern High German.

Under the head of "Grammatische Abhandlungen" our author treats of the phonology of

the language. Here he discusses the signs employed to indicate the length or the shortness of the vowels, and traces the exceptions back to that stage in the language when custom fluctuated. The long discussion of the two vowel sounds *ä* and *e* is very interesting. The conclusion is as follows: "a natural result arising from the employment of *ä* according to etymological principles, as is now done in the written language, is that the original differences of the *e*-sounds are constantly disappearing in the pronunciation, which tends to conform to the writing. Now, the short vowels, both *e* and *ä*, are usually pronounced open, the long *e* and *ä* close. This pronunciation is exactly the opposite of the original one in middle Germany and came from the Netherlands, where the educated are less dependent on the dialect; nevertheless it bids fair to become the only accepted one, as it closes a long development in this direction."

The chapters on *o* from Mid. H. G. *ā*; *ö* from Mid. H. G. *e*; *ü* from Mid. H. G. *i*; *o* (*ö*) from Mid. H. G. *u* (*ü*); the umlaut of *u* in Mod. H. G.; and on the *au* and *äu*, are not only interesting but also instructive in the study of vowel changes. In the last case the *au* or *äu*, as *kauen wiederkauen*, *däuen verdauen*, *Gau*, or *Gäu*, is due to double forms in the older language. At present *äu* corresponds to a Mid. H. G. *ā* or *ou*; *au* to a Mid. H. G. *iu* or *ou*.

It would be impossible to mention all the interesting points discussed so fully and thoroughly in this book. We can only recommend those who are especially interested in the development of Mod. H. G. to make a careful study of it, believing they will be well repaid for their labor.

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PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN AND THE AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—May I say a few words to prevent possible misunderstandings of the table in Dr. LEARNED's article, in your April number, on

the application of the phonetic system of the American Dialect Society (A. D. S.) to Pennsylvania German (P. G.)?

The A. D. S. symbols can not be exactly defined in the terminology of Visible Speech except for individuals or for particular localities where persons may be found who have had the necessary training in phonetics. Exact definitions, which are very desirable, will fix dialect variation better than the present "practical though necessarily imperfect" A. D. S. symbols can do, and when definition is possible the greater the accuracy the better. Mr. GRANDGENT's paper read at the last meeting of the Modern Language Association shows the kind of study needed and also some of the difficulties in the way of exact definition.

In the table on p. 119 (cols. 237-238) should not "mid-mixed-wide" be "low-front-wide"? The A.D.S. *æ* (not *ae*), representing the sound of *a* in *hat*, *mad*, could hardly be call "mid-mixed-wide." The A. D. S. *ou* was proposed for the diphthonged sound common in *so*, *no*, *dough*, etc., as more convenient to write and print than *ô*. If necessary it can be written *ôu* to distinguish it from a diphthong *ou* the first part of which is *o* in *not*. This latter diphthong is the one meant by *ou* in the table, p. 120. On the same page, for *t+s* and *k+s*, read *ts* and *ks*, and instead of *z* in *dz* the A. D. S. sign is a sort of tailed *z*, resembling a figure 3.

I do not suppose that Dr. LEARNED's intention was to define the A. D. S. symbols, but only to show that they could be used—with some additional signs which will be provided as occasion calls for them—to write a non-English dialect, an application of the system which is of interest and illustrates what may be done in the future.

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"EARLY ENGLISH."

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Permit me to reply to Professor Cook's inquiry in No. 5, (vol. v, p. 155) of your journal, that in the catalogue of this University the term "Early English" is used to denote Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and Middle English as far as CHAUCER inclusive, say 1400. It is very true that there is no agreement

as to the terminology of the periods of English, and I despair of ever seeing a consistent terminology employed. The term "Middle English" seems almost as variously used as "Early English," and even here, while some place CHAUCER as Late Middle English, others assign him to Early Modern English. Dr. MURRAY's arrangement by centuries is, perhaps, as good as any other, although it multiplies periods unnecessarily.

If we could agree to close the Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, period at 1150, the Middle English at 1400, and call the language since 1400 Modern English, we might at least approach uniformity. If more sub-divisions were desired, Early Middle English might denote 1150 to 1300, and Late Middle English 1300 to 1400; Early Modern English 1400 to 1600, and Late Modern English since 1600, thus discarding "Early English" and the Transition Periods in the terminology. —Respectfully submitted to a vote.

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THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SCRIBES OF BEOWULF.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—In your April issue certain statements were made concerning my article in the preceding number on "The Differences between the Scribes of Beowulf." Of these I wish to say a few words.

The question of the origin of the "Beowulf" can hardly be considered as conclusively settled. TEN BRINK uses these words in closing his argument, p. 241: "Man möge von den in diesem Kapitel ausgestellten Untersuchungen halten was man wolle." I did not wish to discuss the new hypothesis, and so, perhaps unwisely, used the language of the old.

Again, the statement that "dialectal differences are systematically arranged in TEN BRINK's work," tends to give the erroneous impression that he has exhausted the differences between the scribes. Such is not the case. He has not given a single list that does not contain forms used by both A and B, although the list on p. 240 contains but few forms used by A. This list, however, closes with "u. s. w." TEN BRINK's lists were